

such as the one offered by the President, that punishes parent care and encourages government controlled institutionalized care does not strengthen the family. Rather, it weakens families while increasing the role of Washington bureaucrats in the lives of our children.

INTRODUCTION OF HOME CARE LEGISLATION

HON. MERRILL COOK

OF UTAH

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 12, 1998

Mr. COOK. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to join my colleague from Massachusetts, Congressman MCGOVERN as an original cosponsor of legislation to address some serious problems caused by certain provisions included in the Balanced Budget Act.

There were several provisions included in the Act intended to address alleged Medicare waste and fraud occurring in the home care industry. However, some of these provisions are causing a great deal of hardship and heartbreak for seniors in Utah, Massachusetts, and across the nation.

Why is this happening?

First, the provisions in the Balanced Budget Act put the cart before the horse. They have forced home care providers to cut costs at least six months before the federal government tells the providers how much they have to cut.

Second, the provisions create a Rube Goldberg system where home care providers are rewarded or punished depending on what kind of fiscal year they use. I would need a one hour special order to try to explain this one.

The bill that Congressman MCGOVERN and I are introducing will address these problems. I urge my colleagues to join as cosponsors of this legislation.

TRIBUTE TO CHIEF A. LEROY WARD

HON. FRANK PALLONE, JR.

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 12, 1998

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to the late Mr. A. Leroy Ward, the former police chief of Neptune Township, NJ, who passed away earlier this week at the age of 83.

Mr. Ward served 35 years on the Neptune police force, beginning as a patrolman in 1944 and rising through the ranks of sergeant, lieutenant and captain before appointed chief on February 1, 1964. He retired in 1979. A loving husband and father, he is survived by his wife of 61 years, Dorothea, two sons, two daughters, 10 grandchildren and five great-grandchildren. His son James A. Ward currently serves as the Neptune Township Police Chief.

Mr. Ward was born in Newark, NJ, and lived for more than 50 years in the Ocean Grove area of Neptune. He was past president of the Monmouth County Chiefs of Police Association and a member of the New Jersey International Chiefs of Police Association. He was a member of St. Paul's United Methodist Church in Ocean Grove, the Wall-Spring Lake

Lodge 73 of the Free and Accepted Masons, the Washington Fire Company 1 of Ocean Grove and the New Jersey Exempt Firemen's Association.

The obituary for Mr. Ward that was published in the Asbury Park Press of New Jersey quoted political and law enforcement leaders praising the former chief for his consummate professionalism. Mr. Ward served during a time of explosive growth in Neptune Township, and he responded very well to the challenges and opportunities posed by these changes. He reached out to all parts of the community, from young people to senior citizens, and fostered a strong sense of respect between the police and the community.

Mr. Speaker, I am honored to pay tribute to this great public servant and fine man, Chief A. Leroy Ward. I extend my condolences to his family, and hope that the many tributes pouring in for Mr. Ward will be a source of comfort to them.

"REDUCE THE FEDERAL DEBT, ENHANCE THE LINE ITEM VETO"

HON. CHRISTOPHER JOHN

OF LOUISIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 12, 1998

Mr. JOHN. Mr. Speaker, about a year ago, I stood on this floor for the first time as a Member of Congress and spoke in support of the balanced budget agreement. In my comments, I praised all those who worked diligently to secure our Nation's immediate future by tackling the deficit. However, I also recognized that another, more ominous problem awaited us on the horizon; and that problem could only be addressed once we got a handle on our deficit. That problem, Mr. Speaker, is our national debt.

We all know the numbers—the federal debt now stands at over \$5.3 trillion, which amounts to roughly \$20,000 for every man, woman, and child in the country. According to the President's budget, we must allocate roughly 14 percent of our budget this year simply to pay the net interest on the debt.

Mr. Speaker, I know all of you share my enthusiasm over the continued expansion of the economy and the economic forecasts predicting a balanced budget as early as fiscal year 1999. In addition, we are all aware of the debate currently being waged with respect to what our priorities should be if we experience a budget surplus; however, now is not the time to abandon our fiscal belt-tightening. Rather, the tools we now have in place to ward against pork-barrel spending need to be preserved and enhanced.

An example of this is the President's line item veto authority. As you recall, the impetus behind the line item veto was, in part, to ward against wasteful spending—a concern that I believe is paramount regardless of whether a budget deficit or surplus exists. Mr. Speaker, it is with this particular concern in mind that I come to the floor today. For without legislative action, the Line Item Veto Act of 1996 and the fiscal responsibility if represents will be endangered due to a technicality.

Under current law, the President may enroll this authority only in the event of a budget deficit. Regardless of our opinion over how the President recently used this authority, if we

support the ideal behind the legislation, we must remain vigilant against wasteful spending and provide this continued authority in the event of a budget surplus.

Today, I dropped a bill to remedy this problem and I urge my colleagues' serious consideration and support in moving his fiscally prudent legislation forward.

Mr. Speaker, my proposal would preserve the continuation of the line item veto by adding language to the Act clarifying its applicability during a budget surplus and directly the savings to be used to reduce the national debt. This not only provides clear congressional intent, but also strengthens the constitutionality of the Act by limiting the delegation of authority between the Legislative and Executive branches to times of a deficit or a surplus.

Again, I believe that this is a great, fiscally responsible issue for all in Congress to champion during the 2d session and I welcome your comments and cosponsorship. Please join me in supporting this legislation.

PUERTO RICO POLITICAL STATUS ACT

HON. CARLOS A. ROMERO-BARCELÓ

OF PUERTO RICO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 12, 1998

Mr. ROMERO-BARCELÓ. Mr. Speaker, three days from today, one hundred years ago, history was made. On the night of February 15, 1898 at exactly 9:40 p.m. the United States battleship USS Maine exploded in Cuba's Havana Harbor.

To this day the cause of the explosion, which killed 266 naval officers and crewmen, remains a mystery. Yet despite the unknown source of the attack, it was the spark that fueled the Spanish American War in 1898.

A war that Americans proudly entered as a crusade to free Cuba from Spanish rule.

A war that also liberated Puerto Rico from Spanish rule, but turned Puerto Rico into a U.S. territory.

We have now been a territory of the United States for 100 years and disenfranchised U.S. citizens for 81 years. But a century has passed us by and we remain disenfranchised and a colony, at a time when colonies are not only unfashionable but embarrassing to a Nation that preaches democracy throughout the world and calls for a plebiscite in Cuba.

Puerto Ricans are part of the great American family. Puerto Ricans are United States citizens who have proudly fought in numerous conflicts for our Nation. They have shed their blood and they have defended democracy like any other soldier living in the 50 states.

The U.S. citizens of Puerto Rico deserve much more than the continued postponements for consideration of their case. Congress has procrastinated our political dilemma for too long. The Legislature of Puerto Rico has enacted joint resolutions which it has sent to three consecutive Congresses, the 103rd, the 104th, the 105th—asking for Congress to take the necessary steps to resolve the Puerto Rico political status. This Congress, the 105th Congress, has the authority and the moral responsibility to approve H.R. 856—the US-Puerto Rico Political Status Act, a bill for self-determination—a bill which will pave the road to enfranchisement and equality.